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Bethel Baptist Church

Bible Study and Discussion Group

Topic: “Experiencing God”

Textbook: “Experiencing God (2021 Edition): Knowing and Doing the Will of God”

Handout #6

Ch. 6 – “God Is At Work Around You”

“My Father is still working, and I am working also...I assure you: The Son is not able to do anything on His own, but only what He see the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, the Son also does these things in the same way. For the Father loves the Son and shows Him everything He is doing.”
(John 5:17, 19-20)

Brief Review and Insights from Reading

Intro.

- Story – “An Inner City Church”
 - Key point: “When you want to learn how to know and do the will of God, you should always look to Jesus. We can find no better model than the way He conducted His earthly life...”
 - During His life on earth, Jesus _____ every _____ the Father gave Him.
 - He _____ to do the Father’s _____.
 - He _____ what _____ to God and _____ to His will looks like.
- The Trinity
 - Define or describe the “Trinity”.
 - God the _____, Christ the _____, God the _____ are all _____ of one _____. They are all one _____.
 - In Scripture, whenever God encountered people, He did it in one of three ways: in the person of the Father, the Son, or the Spirit.
 - Whenever God is working, all _____ of the Trinity are involved.
- God Involves Us
 - Jesus recognized that His Father is always working on earth to accomplish His divine purposes.

- God is _____ at work _____ a lost world, and He _____ to involve His servants in carrying out His redemptive plans. (read 2 Cor. 5:17-20)
- The model by Jesus of knowing and doing the Father's will (see John 5)...
- The Father's Work Through Jesus...
 - Jesus spoke of the importance of relationship with the Father and dependence on the Father to show Him what to do.
 - The Father initiated the relationship and invited the Son to be involved in His activity.
 - The Father revealed His plan to the Son and the Son joined the Father where He was at work.
 - Jesus realized he could do nothing by Himself. Yet with the Father at work in Him, He could do anything.
 - If Jesus was that dependent on the Father, then you and I should realize how ludicrous it is for us to set out on our own without any direction or guidance from the Father.
- Story – “Watching For God At Work On Campus”

I. God Is Always Active

- a. Right now, God is working all around you.
- b. A great tragedy is that many of God's people long to experience Him, but they do not know how to recognize Him at work in their midst.
- c. The Holy Spirit will instruct you and help you know when and where God is working.
- d. Once you know where He is working, you can adjust your life to join Him in His divine purposes.

II. A Love Relationship

- a. Many people long for God to do a significant work in their life. However, they try to bypass the love relationship.
- b. The love relationship is why God created you. That is far more important to Him than what you do for Him. Anticipate that the first thing God will do on your life is to draw you into an intimate love relationship with Himself.
- c. Whenever your relationship with God is as it should be, He will begin giving you assignments at His initiative.
- d. Whenever seems that God is not doing anything fresh in your life, focus on the love relationship and stay there until God gives you a new assignment.

III. Focus On the Call, Not the Gift

a. Discussion on “spiritual gifts”

- i. Common teaching regarding spiritual gifts, assumptions, and possible frustrations...
- ii. Important distinction by author, “It is important to understand that a spiritual gift is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit working in people’s lives to enable them to obey what God asks them to do.”
- iii. Biblically, God always gives the assignment first. Then God equips the person by the Holy Spirit to accomplish what He assigns.
- iv. We must remember that when we became Christians, God placed His Holy Spirit with us. We did not receive a spiritual gift; we received the Spirit Himself. When the Spirit resides in us, we have all the power of God and the resources of heaven at our disposal.
- v. When God gives us a task, and we obey, God will carry out what He intended through our lives. The evidence of God’s activity in our lives is what we usually identify as a spiritual gift. But a person who has never accepted an assignment from God does not need to be spiritually equipped because that individual is not undertaking a divine task.

b. Focusing on identifying gifts instead of determining God’s assignment can be severely limiting...

- i. Because believers may base their future usefulness for God on their past effectiveness.
- ii. The way many teach about spiritual gifts is that God will always use your life in similar ways according to whatever gift He has built into you...
- iii. The common approach to spiritual gifts can become self-centered rather than God-centered...
- iv. We can’t discover God’s activity; God must reveal it to us. We don’t choose what we will do for God; He invites us to join Him where He wants to involve us. (Author suggests this is a point for seeking understanding from God regarding the relationship between God’s assignment and spiritual gifts.)

c. The Old Testament Pattern

- i. The Old Testament lays the foundation for understanding the Holy Spirit’s work in the New Testament...

- ii. The pattern in the Old Testament...The Spirit did not continually reside within believers. Rather, the Spirit would come upon individuals to enable them to achieve a specific assignment God had given them. (Authors provide examples: Moses, David, Deborah, Ezekiel...Note pattern.)
 - iii. The Old Testament bears witness that the Spirit of God was always present to equip individuals to carry out His assignments...The Holy Spirit was the gift.
 - iv. The Spirit manifested His presence by equipping people to function where God had assigned them.
 - d. Story – Sincere but Not Equipped
 - i. Key point: Key point: “one of the most significant roles of church staff (ministers/leaders) is to help people understand where God is assigning them to serve in the body so they can experience the joy of God working powerfully through them to accomplish what only He can do.”
- IV. The Equipping of the Holy Spirit (Important Section to Read and Discuss)
- a. The Holy Spirit does not give believers a gift. The Holy Spirit is the gift. (1 Cor. 12:7; Acts 2:38)
 - b. The Spirit reveals Himself to each member for the common good of the body...
 - c. The church is the body of Christ. → Christ adds members to local churches. → Each member has the Holy Spirit's active presence in his or her life. → The Holy Spirit does not work in people's lives merely for their own edification but so the body of Christ can be built up and strengthened. That is why we need each other. Without a healthy and functioning body, a church will miss much of what God intends for it...
 - d. A spiritual gift is a manifestation of God at work through you. God works in and through you to bear spiritual fruit. Your focus should be on God living His life through you to accomplish His purposes...
 - e. Focus your attention on hearing God's call to an assignment which is His invitation for you to join Him. When you adjust your life to Him and obey Him, the Holy Spirit will work in you, enabling you to accomplish what God desires.

Summary & Questions for Reflection

Read Chapter 7

Closing Prayer